

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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THE VALUE OF FREEMASONRY

Let me begin by repeating the opening words of the Charge delivered to the newly initiated brother. "As you have now passed through the ceremony of your initiation, allow me to congratulate you on being admitted a member of our ancient and honorable society. Ancient, as having subsisted from time immemorial, and honorable because by a natural tendency it conduces to make all those honorable who are strictly obedient to its precepts. Indeed, no institution can boast a more solid foundation than that on which Freemasonry rests."

Why has Freemasonry not only survived through the centuries but also has flourished exceedingly? When we think back and consider the story revealed in our annals we soon realize the changes of the condition of society have been so great that other institutions which began, even at the time of the modern revival of Masonry, in 1717, have long since passed into oblivion.

We could enumerate the many blessings which science and invention have brought to the hand of man, even since the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was instituted, all proclaiming the truth that the years have increased our knowledge, our horizon has been broadened, our sympathies have been quickened.

Freemasonry remains the same today as it was in the long ago. The mysteries of the ancients have faded from the minds of men; but evolved from them, purified and enriched by the Volume of the Sacred Law; moulded and fitted to meet the needs of modern thought, Freemasonry has survived to bless mankind. It has served to unite all humanity, to break down barriers which divided people, and has enabled men to meet on the level where all other measures have failed.

Perhaps no better illustration can be given than the experience of brethren in the United States following the Civil War. In the dark days, when the smoke of battle cleared away, there was found the silver line of Masonic brotherhood running from hearts loyal in the North to hearts sincere in the South. Coming closer to home, we find a parallel in our own Jurisdiction following the schism of 1878. Who is there to deny that the experience did not solidify Freemasonry in Manitoba into a stronger bond of mutual love and affection.

Such experiences, disastrous and unfortunate, while the fire of anger runs riot, have the effect, ultimately, of binding together the men whose lives have been tested by the level, the plumb and the square.

What then gives Freemasonry its power and usefulness? What is it that attracts His Majesty the King, and his subject; the statesman and the peasant, the learned and the unlearned to its portals? Not its so-called secrets; not its ceremonies; impressive though they be. Secrecy in some degree prevails in all the relations of man. Freemasons adopt it as a convenient method to promote the noble ends of the fraternity. But, the secrecy of our institution does not constitute our landmarks. It is of the least importance in the work that Masons are intended to do. Its beauty, its principles and its success do not depend upon its secrets, it can and would survive without them.

Freemasonry lives because it is a Brotherhood in the broadest and fullest sense; truly, it is a brotherhood of man. It stimulates its members to be high-minded and unselfish. Its ministry is one of **LIGHT** and **LOVE**. It is not founded on wealth. It takes two common, ordinary, working tools—the square and the level—and proclaims its message to all in the same voice.

It seeks to promote love between man and man. It aims to bring humanity into one grand union; to bring the high and the low into one fellowship of brotherhood. The lessons it teaches are founded on truth, the Divine Truth contained in its Great Light, and there it centres its hope for the human race.

It stands for peace against war; for love as against hate; for charity as against selfishness; for religion as against atheism. Its hope and effort are the fulfilment of the Angels song, "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men."

One may gaze upon the world scene and find Masonry and its Lodges driven from countries in which the Craft had habitation for generations. We cannot be surprised at this—it could not be otherwise, because we stand for liberty for all, everywhere.

Do we fully realize that every candidate for Freemasonry must be a **FREE MAN**. After his admission he cannot remain a Freemason unless he continues to be free. It allows no shackles on body, mind or soul. No slave-chains clank at its altars; no mind is curbed in its ambitions; and no soul is bound by narrow creed. We are volunteers and there has never been a conscript in our ranks. In every age and among all people, everywhere, it has taught a simple faith; equality in its ranks, fraternity among its members, and charity to those upon whom misfortune has fallen. To call one's self a Mason and despise the Golden Rule is inconsistent. To profess to be a Mason and fail to keep the moral law is fraud.

Let us be reminded at all times that the white apron which we wear is a badge of purity and there is not a tool or an implement which is not the symbol of virtue and duty. The plumb reminds us to walk uprightly; the trowel to spread the cement of Brotherly Love; and the Square and Compasses to guard our actions and keep us within due bounds.

Here, within our sacred circle, hand grasps hand in friendship and like the knights of old who gathered about the Round Table of King Arthur, we share our social joys.

Here, as in all Masonic Lodges, tolerance should hold its seat and power, and meeting upon the level, it is fit and proper that we should part upon the square.

Here, liberty and equality, are our great watchwords and we are taught each may confide in those about him, and find help and encouragement in the midst of misfortune and sorrow.

Here, symbol, ceremony and ritual are evoked to bring out the best within us.

Let us be worthy of the name we bear, let us be truly Master Masons. We know that Brotherly Love, Charity, Fidelity, Truth, were born far back among the mysterious shadows of the East. They have descended through the years as a heritage and an inspiration.

These are the Values of our Freemasonry and they shall endure until the heavens shall be no more.

WISDOM — STRENGTH — BEAUTY

In looking over Mackey's Encyclopedia recently we came across an interesting item which we are certain will be of equal interest to many of our readers so we pass it along.

"G.O.D. The initials of Gomer, Oz, Dabar. It is a singular coincidence, and worthy of thought, that the letters composing the English name of Deity should be the initials of the Hebrew words wisdom, strength, and beauty; the three great pillars, or metaphorical supports, of Masonry. They seem to present almost the only reason that can reconcile a Mason to the use of the initial "G" in its conspicuous suspension in the East of the Lodge in place of the Delta. The incident seems to be more than an accident.

Dabar.....	Wisdom.....	D.
Oz.....	Strength.....	O.
Gomer.....	Beauty.....	G.

Thus the initials conceal the true meaning.

A CORNER STONE IS LAID

On Sunday afternoon, 13th May, Grand Lodge performed the ancient ceremony of laying the corner stone of St. Alban's Church, Rathgar Avenue, Winnipeg. The invitation of the Wardens and Vestry was presented by our Grand Chaplain who is Rector of the Parish. It was gratifying to see more than two hundred brethren assemble and proceed in procession to the site of the new edifice. In the absence of the Grand Master, M.W. Brother William Douglas was delegated to conduct the ceremony assisted by the other Grand Lodge officers. At the request of several who participated in the ceremony the brief address delivered by the Acting Grand Master follows;

"It has ever been the custom when members of the Masonic Craft are invited to perform the ceremonies we have participated in this afternoon, that some brother should address a few appropriate remarks to the assembled gathering.

"To me there is a deep significance in the fact that the Freemasons of Manitoba have been privileged to perform this ancient ceremony. This significance centres around the honored name of the parish—St. Alban's.

"Doubtless the members of the congregation are proud to bear the name of St. Alban, and I presume the story of the proto-martyr of England is familiar to all those connected with the Church. However, in the realm of Freemasonry, the members of the ancient and honorable Craft also have an interest in St. Alban because the Freemasons of England claim this Saint as having been intimately connected with the Craft in that tight little island.

"In one of the earliest Constitutions (Anderson 1738) we read; 'This (the story of St. Alban) is asserted by all the old Constitutions, and the English Masons firmly believe it.'

"Referring still further to the Old Constitutions, here is the record handed to us from the long, long ago. 'St. Alban loved Masons well and cherished them much, and he made their pay right good, viz., two shillings per week and three-pence to their cheer; whereas, before that time, through all the land, a Mason had but a penny a day and his meat, until St. Alban amended it. He also obtained from the King a Charter for the Freemasons, for to hold a general council, and gave it the name of Assembly, and was thereat himself, as Grand Master and helped make Masons and gave them good charges.'

"There is still another tradition, details of which are to be found in a book published nearly two centuries ago. In this volume we find this reference to the Masonic character and position of St. Alban. 'In the following (the third) century,

Gordian sent many architects over (into England) who constituted themselves into Lodges, and instructed the Craftsmen in the true principles of Freemasonry; and a few years later, Carusias was made Emperor of the British Isles, and being a great lover of art and science, appointed Albanus, Grand Master of Masons, who employed the Fraternity in building the palace of Verulam or St. Albans as it was later known'.

"We realize these statements are legends or traditions. But, the historic background is there and we know that in the time of St. Alban architecture began to be encouraged in England. In our own practical day we still find a place for legend and tradition and every member of the Masonic Craft is familiar with one particular legend. We can surely content ourselves then with the thought that St. Alban was a celebrated architect, an encourager of able and skilled workmen, and we believe further that the proto-martyr, whose name is perpetuated in this parish, typifies Freemasonry at the time he lived in England.

"The lapse of time has dimmed the exact relation of St. Alban to his Masonic brethren but we have no reason whatever to cast doubt upon the legend whilst accepting others without challenge. And so, my friends, we of the Masonic Craft along with the parishioners of St. Albans, claim something in common, something very good.

"St. Alban was not the only legendary Mason to suffer for his beliefs. Down through the ages our Craft has always been the exponent of freedom. Our great principles, Brotherly Love, Belief and Truth, are fundamental. Freemasonry from the very beginning has been the steady, unvarying friend of man. It has been the constant messenger of peace and love. It pioneered fraternal intercourse in this country and has never deviated from the Divine Plan that gave it birth.

"We bring together men in every walk of life. We erect no sectarian barriers. We extend the right hand of fellowship to all men who are good citizens, true to God, just to their Country, and honored by their neighbours. Such men cannot fail to find a spiritual place of refreshment in a Masonic Lodge.

"And so, ladies, by and through these brief remarks I have uncovered to you some of the so-called Masonic secrets. We gladly share them with all the good people of this district.

"On behalf of the Most Worshipful, Grand Master, Charles E. Cole, who is absent on Masonic business in a distant part of the Province, I extend to the Wardens, the Vestry, and the members of St. Alban's Church, the united congratulations of the fourteen thousand Freemasons in Manitoba. May all your efforts be crowned with success and every anticipation realized. That is the sincere greeting of the Masonic Craft of Manitoba."

TRUE WEALTH

Despite the not-inconsiderable energy that has gone into the study of political economy and the laws governing the production and distribution of goods, one of man's most clamant needs today is a right understanding of what constitutes true wealth.

What discoveries men are making for themselves today! Many, for example, are painfully learning, to their own astonishment, that money is not necessarily a sign of true wealth, that there are things money cannot buy.

Others are beginning to see that productive potentials and man-power within a State are not by themselves guarantees of true wealth.

Others are thinking still more deeply into this question of wealth, and suspecting that it is not necessarily related to hours of work and hours of leisure, to standards of living or even full employment. Not necessarily, for these are things that must be considered; but when fullest consideration has been afforded, there is still no guarantee of true wealth.

It is surely being borne in upon us that true wealth is one of life's imponderables, that it is akin to loyalty, sympathy, understanding cooperation, and ways of living—the larger life, in short. And as such it should be impressing itself upon us that it has a necessary connection with ends. To what purpose our material wealth; for what end are we straining and striving; where is it taking us?

These are questions our political economists will not answer. But they are questions that urgently demand an answer from every thoughtful man.

Too late men have often tragically discovered that things by which formerly they set little store—their plighted word, their consciences, their loyalty to a common purpose, their support for their fellow-men, have been bartered in the frenzy of the world, and that these are things they cannot re-purchase.

Wherefore the wise man will frequently ponder this question—What does constitute true wealth?

—J. Y. Simpson.

IN PASSING

Your editor will be absent for some time on an extended summer holiday. For this reason he has prepared copy for the first issue of the Fall season in advance in case his return is delayed. With this explanation it will be understood why some items of recent events and happenings are necessarily withheld.